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NOTE

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The resolutions of the Security Council, numbered in accordance with a system adopted in 1964, are published in yearly volumes of *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council.* The new system, which has been applied retroactively to resolutions adopted before 1 January 1965, became fully operative on that date.

2472nd MEETING

Held in New York on Tuesday, 6 September 1983, at 4.15 p.m.

President: Mr. Noel G. SINCLAIR (Guyana).

Present: The representatives of the following States: China, France, Guyana, Jordan, Malta, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Poland, Togo, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zaire, Zimbabwe.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2472)

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Letter dated 1 September 1983 from the Acting Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/15947);
   Letter dated 1 September 1983 from the Permanent Observer for the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/15948);
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   Letter dated 1 September 1983 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/15950);
   Letter dated 2 September 1983 from the Acting Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/15951)

The meeting was called to order at 4.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 1 September 1983 from the Acting Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/15947);

Letter dated 1 September 1983 from the Permanent Observer for the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/15948);

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Letter dated 2 September 1983 from the Acting Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/15951)

1. The PRESIDENT: In accordance with the decisions taken at previous meetings on this item [*2470th and 2471st meetings*], I invite the representative of Canada and the Observer for the Republic of Korea to take places at the Council table. I invite the representatives of Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan Liberia, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Philippines, Portugal, Sierra Leone, Spain and Sweden to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Pelletier (Canada) and Mr. Kim (Republic of Korea) took places at the Council table; Mr. Joseph (Australia), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Miss Dever (Belgium), Mr. Jelonek (Federal Republic of Germany), Mr. La Rocca (Italy), Mr. Kuroda (Japan), Mrs. Jones (Liberia), Mr. Harland (New Zealand), Mr. Fafowora (Nigeria), Mr. Moreno Salcedo (Philippines), Mr. Syder (Portugal), Mr. Koroma (Sierra Leone), Mr. de Piniés (Spain) and Mr. Amneus (Sweden) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

2. The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Colombia, Egypt, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Malaysia in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the provisions of Article 31 of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Albán Holguín (Colombia), Mr. Khalil (Egypt), Mr. Treiki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) and Mr. Syed Ariff (Malaysia) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

3. Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): I have asked to speak again today in order to convey to the Council a statement from the Soviet Government on the question that we are discussing which has just been published. I shall read the statement aloud.

"The TASS statement, published on September 2 of this year on instruction of the Soviet Government, already reported the rude violation of the State frontiers of the Soviet Union by a plane, which on the night of August 31-September 1 intruded into the airspace of the USSR over the Kamchatka Peninsula and then in the course of two hours had flown over the Sea of Okhotsk and Sakhalin Island. It also mentioned the measures taken by the anti-aircraft defences, both ground and air ones, with the aim of forcing the plane to land at one of the airfields on Sakhalin Island. The subsequent investigation confirmed the earlier mentioned data and supplemented it.

"The intruder plane entered the airspace over Kamchatka in an area where a most important base of the strategic nulcear forces of the USSR is located. At the same time—and this is now admitted by the American side—another spy plane of the United States Air Force, an RC-135, that is similar to it, was in the same area near the Soviet border at the same altitude.

"Several Soviet interceptor planes were sent aloft. One of them controlled the actions of the American RC-135 plane. A second flew into the area where the intruder plane was and signalled to it that it had intruded into the airspace of the USSR. The warnings were ignored.

"When it was approaching Sakhalin Island the intruder was again intercepted by fighter planes of the anti-aircraft defences, and again attempts were made to establish contact with it, including with the help of the known general call signal on the international emergency frequency of 121.5 megacycles. Contrary to the false contentions of the United States President, Soviet anti-aircraft defence fighter planes are fitted out with communication equipment in which this frequency is fixed. So these signals had to be received by the intruder plane, but it did not respond to them. Neither did it respond, as it has been said earlier, also to other signals and actions of the Soviet fighter planes.

"The Soviet radio-control services picked up short coded radio signals transmitted from time to time, such signals that are usually used in transmitting intelligence information.

"The Anti-Aircraft Forces Command of the area, having analyzed thoroughly the actions of the intruder plane, its route passing also in the area of Sakhalin over military bases, arrived at the conclusion that a reconnaissance aircraft performing special tasks was in the airspace of the USSR. We arrived at this conclusion also because of the fact that the plane was flying over strategically important areas of the Soviet Union. The fighter plane made warning shots with tracer shells along the route of the intruder plane. Such a measure is envisaged by international rules.

"Since even after this the intruder plane did not obey the demand to fly to a Soviet airfield and tried to evade pursuit, the interceptor-fighter plane of the anti-aircraft defences fulfilled the order of the command post to stop the flight. Such actions are fully in keeping with the law on the State border of the USSR which has been published.

"The Soviet pilots, in stopping the actions of the intruder plane, could not know that it was a civilian aircraft. It was flying without navigation lights, at the height of night, in conditions of bad visibility and was not answering the signals. The assertions of the United States President that Soviet pilots knew that it was a civilian aircraft are not in keeping with reality.

"Dozens of international air routes pass over Soviet territory. Foreign planes have been flying them for many years and nothing has been happening to them so far as they observe the rules.

"We will continue to act in keeping with our legislation, which is fully in accord with international regulations. This wholly applies to the question of ensuring the security of our borders. It is the sovereign right of every State to protect its borders, in particular its airspace. This is one of the commonly recognized principles of international law on which relations between States rest. So the United States President makes himself out as an ignoramus saying, as he did in his address on September 5, that the Soviet Union guards its borders in what it claims is its airspace.

"But the point here, of course, is not the ignorance of one United States official or another; the point is a deliberate pre-planned action in an area which is strategically important to the Soviet Union. The instigators of that action could not help realizing what its outcome would be but went ahead with a major intelligence operation with the use, as is now becoming clear, of a civilian plane, deliberately exposing its passengers to mortal danger.

"Can anyone imagine anything more cynical than Ronald Reagan's statement that no one will ever know how data was fed into the plane's computer which subsequently directed the plane into Soviet airspace to carry out its spying mission. It was not a technical error. The plan was to carry out without a hitch the above intelligence operation, but if it was stymied, to turn everything into a major political provocation against the Soviet Union.

"This conclusion is confirmed by all subsequent actions of the United States Administration. Its leaders, including the President in person, launched a malicious and hostile anti-Soviet campaign over a very short time, clearly using a pre-arranged script. Its essence has been revealed in its concentrated form in a televised speech of the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, on September 5, to try to blacken the image of the Soviet Union and discredit its social system, to provoke a feeling of hatred toward soviet people, to present the aims of the foreign policy of the USSR in a distorted perspective, and to distract attention from its peace initiatives.

"In a situation when tensions and anti-Soviet hysteria are being whipped up, leaders of the United States would like to evade the solution of major international problems on which the destinies of the peoples depend. And the moment for this provocation has been chosen purposefully. It has been staged precisely now at a time when the question is being solved whether the arms race will be stopped and the threat of nuclear war removed or whether this threat will keep growing. All indications are, including the mentioned speech of the American President, that the United States Administration intends to follow the road of intensifying confrontation with the Soviet Union. Ronald Reagan's credo, to quote him, is 'peace through strength'.

"No amount of discourse upon 'the moral values', 'the spirit of humanism', 'the treasure of human life' can cover up such a policy. Can the statesmen of the country which deprived millions of people in Indo-China of their lives in a most brutal manner, which, at one with Israeli aggressors, is killing the Lebanese and Palestinians, and whose conscience is burdened with tens of thousands of deaths of Chilean and Salvadorian patriots, speak of morality and humanism? The list of crimes committed by American imperialism is a long one and can be continued.

"The people on the plane that was used by American special services for their dirty aims fell victim to a fresh crime.

"The Soviet Government expresses regret over the death of innocent people and shares the sorrow of their bereaved relatives and friends. The entire responsibility for this tragedy rests wholly and fully with the leaders of the United States of America."

4. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Belgium. I invite her to take a place at the Council table and to make her statement.

5. Miss DEVER (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): I wish first of all to thank the members of the Council for having kindly permitted Belgium to take part in this debate. Previous speakers have used the words "indignation", "shock", "revulsion", and "horror". Those are the very emotions felt by the Belgian public and Government at the announcement that a civilian aircraft of Korean Air Lines has been cold-bloodedly shot down with 269 persons on board.

6. On the one hand, this is a flagrant violation of the current rules of civil aviation, which bind the Soviet Union as they do the other members of the international community. On the other hand, this is an inhuman act, and a violation of the most elementary rules of conduct among civilized nations, which no motives can justify without injecting an inadmissible element of cynicism into international relations.

7. Even if we suppose—as it has been claimed without the least proof—that Soviet airspace had been violated, other legally defensible possibilities were available. This unarmed air liner, perfectly identifiable and followed for more than two hours, could have been forced by military aircraft to leave the airspace. It could even have been forced to land.

8. Clearly, the destruction of a civilian aircraft is out of all proportion to its having intruded into Soviet airspace. There seems to be no justification for the invocation of the concept of self-defence as an excuse for this use of force. We cannot imagine that in the eyes of the Soviet Union the security interests it claimed to be defending were so important—especially since so many other technical means exist for risk-free collection of information—as to call for a military attack against an unarmed civilian aircraft, which was downed, it seems, just as it was about to leave Soviet airspace, and thus to demonstrate such contempt for human life.

9. We should still like to believe that this was what has been called an act of bravado on the part of an over-zealous subordinate who will be appropriately punished. We do not wish to think that the attack was covered up at a higher level.

10. The international community's acceptance that certain circumstances justified the action which has just cost the lives of 269 men, women and children would introduce a factor of permanent insecurity into international civil aviation.

11. The Soviet Union must shoulder full responsibility for the incident, guarantee facilities for on-site investigation, punish those who turn out to be responsible, and take all measures to avoid any repetition of such incidents.

12. Otherwise, the consequences of this baleful affair will continue to weigh heavily on the atmosphere of international relations at a time when, because of serious international difficulties and important on-going negotiations, we have a greater need than ever for security and for at least a minimum of mutual trust.

13. Mr. AMEGA (Togo) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation cordially congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of September, a month which is beginning under rather gloomy auspices, as though to put to the test once more your great diplomatic talents, which are well known to all. You may be assured that the delegation of Togo will spare no effort to help you in your difficult work.

14. My delegation also congratulates your predecessor, Mr. Luc de La Barre de Nanteuil, a skilled diplomat who guided the Council's work last month in an outstanding manner.

15. It was with amazement and indignation that my country learned of the horrifying news of the loss of 269 innocent human lives, sacrificed for some undefined principle and for a cause whose worth seems by no means beyond question.

16. Did the world need this new tragedy, which has worsened the apocalyptic situation towards which we are being thrust by human intolerance? My delegation does not understand, and it continues to wonder. Why this act of violence, when the present conditions of our common existence require a greater acceptance of man by man, a greater tolerance, and greater co-operation among nations?

17. The deliberate shooting down of a civilian aircraft carrying passengers of various nationalities is a reprehensible act, first of all because it endangers the security of international civil aviation and also because it disturbs international peace and security. Even if there can be no doubt that the South Korean civilian aircraft had strayed from its normal route and for a long time had been in violation of the airspace of a great Power, my delegation feels that the reaction of that great Power to this violation was quite disproportionate. If it had reasons to think that this was not an innocent violation, the Power whose airspace was thus violated has a wide range of means available to it to force the civilian aircraft to land for interrogation and inquiry. That is why my delegation does not understand the explanations provided on the circumstances of this most regrettable incident. For that reason we associate ourselves with the wishes expressed by all delegations that have called for a full elucidation of the circumstances of the incident.

18. It is worth recalling that the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation of 7 December 1944[1] contains no provision authorizing a State whose airspace has been violated to destroy the civilian aircraft having committed such a violation. In the opinion of my delegation, no motive at all can justify this act of deliberate destruction of a civilian passenger aircraft.

19. It is absolutely essential to guarantee the security of civilian aviation and that of the passengers. It is because this security is disturbed by terrorists who hijack planes that hijacking has been so severely and unanimously condemned by the international community. For the same reasons, my delegation believes that the international community must take all necessary measures in order to ensure that an incident such as this never happens again.

20. In conclusion, my delegation wishes to offer to the bereaved families of the victims of this incident our profound and sincere condolences on behalf of the Government and people of Togo.

21. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Italy. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

22. Mr. LA ROCCA (Italy): I should like, Sir, to offer you my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of September and extend to you my best wishes for success in your high office.

23. Italy has asked to take part in this debate because the question considered by the Council concerns not only those countries which are more directly involved in one way or another, but touches upon primary interests of the international community as a whole.

24. The tragedy which has resulted in the loss of 269 human lives in the skies of the Far East leaves us in dismay and disbelief. In expressing its sympathy to the Government of the Republic of Korea, together with its sorrow for the innocent victims of the air disaster, the Italian Government has emphasized that this tragic action, which by no means could be justified, has deeply shocked the conscience of all civilized human beings and raised a feeling of deep anguish and grave concern for the consequences it could entail.

25. The picture emerging from the information provided by various sources allows us to reconstruct the essential dynamics of the events leading to the shooting down of the air liner. Nevertheless, it is clear that what is needed today, as a matter of absolute priority, is to complete this picture in all its relevant aspects. Therefore, we still believe that the Soviet Union must give further detailed explanations in order fully to clarify the responsibilities of this tragic event. As I mentioned earlier, the issue before us today is not an event affecting a limited number of States but one that bears upon basic principles and needs shared by the whole international community.

26. An orderly and secure use of the skies is an essential prerequisite for free and peaceful coexistence in our world. Existing international regulations and standards are aimed at achieving this end, while preserving full respect for the sovereignty of individual States. However, beyond any legal consideration there is a humanitarian dimension of the situation before us that cannot be ignored. Whatever the security requirements of States might be—and no one intends to dismiss them—it is absolutely essential that the protection of national airspace be assured by means which will not endanger the lives of innocent and defenceless civilians, with a negative impact on the system of air traffic, which is significant and instrumental to exchanges among peoples and has acquired, in today's world, an increasingly economic, cultural and social relevance.

27. We cannot believe that there are no adequate procedures to effectively prevent intrusions of foreign civilian air liners in national airspace without having to resort to drastic and inhuman options which would compromise the progress already achieved in regulating and protecting international air navigation in the common interest.

28. In this perspective, the Italian delegation firmly believes that the current debate must not only shed light on the incident and lead to ascertaining fully the responsibilities for this tragedy which has deeply shocked public opinion throughout the world; it should also be taken as an opportunity to renew the common awareness that a strong commitment by all States is needed to prevent the threat of tragic events, such as the one involving the Korean air liner, or other similar episodes of the past, from weighing upon the freedom and safety of air traffic,

which is an essential element for orderly and peaceful relations among nations.

29. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the Observer for the Republic of Korea, on whom I now call.

30. Mr. KIM (Republic of Korea): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving my delegation an opportunity to address the Council once again.

31. May I express my delegation's strong confidence, Sir, that, with your experience, judgement and courage, you will be able to discharge your important responsibilities as President superbly and brilliantly. Indeed, this ability has already been amply demonstrated by the skilled and most judicious manner in which you have guided the Council's very difficult deliberations so far.

32. The Council has been called into session to deal with issues raised by an incident which is at once a tragedy and a heinous crime. It is a tragedy because 269 totally innocent lives, including men, women and children of many different nations, were killed for no apparent reason, without any conceivable cause or understandable purpose. It was a senseless and cruel tragedy. As President Chun Doo Hwan of my country said, we pray for the passengers and crew who were victimized in this tragic incident.

33. The tragedy, as we all know, was the result of a crime, a barbaric act of brutal, wanton violence committed against totally innocent and defenceless people who were only looking forward to another happy landing at Kimpo International Airport in Seoul.

34. In case the representative of the Soviet Union needs to be reminded, the crime—a cold-blooded massacre in the air—was committed by Soviet military authorities. By firing a heat-seeking missile into a Korean Air Lines Boeing 747 passenger aeroplane, Soviet fighter pilots murdered 269 innocent persons. By giving orders to the pilots to shoot down the unarmed civilian aeroplane, Soviet authorities committed the foulest and most heinous murder in the history of civil aviation.

35. I am afraid that it is impossible to undo the tragedy: we cannot bring back the dead. Neither can the Soviet Union undo the crime it has committed. It cannot evade responsibility for the crime it has committed.

36. To deal with the consequences of this crime and to ensure the future safety of international civil aviation, my Government has demanded that the Soviet Union must take at least the following five steps which I included in my earlier statement of 2 September [*2470th meeting*] but will summarize here once more, if representatives will bear with me. First, as Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country emphasized on 2 September, the Soviet Union must tell the world the whole truth concerning this clearly illegal and savage act. Secondly, the Soviet Union must offer a formal apology and full and immediate compensation to the families of the victims—and, I should add, to Korean Air Lines. Such measures as apologies and compensation, as we all know, are absolute requirements under the principles of international law. Thirdly, the Soviet Union must severely punish all those who are responsible for the shooting down of the unarmed civilian aeroplane. Fourthly, the Soviet Union must allow appropriate international organizations, as well as the Governments of the States whose citizens were on the plane, to have unimpeded access to the area where the plane was shot down by a Soviet missile so as to conduct a thorough investigation into the criminal act. Finally, the Soviet Union must offer effective guarantees against a similar incident in the future.

37. I set out those demands in my first statement and many representatives have since expressed strong support for my Government's position. I wish to take this opportunity to express my Government's profound gratitude to those nations which have extended to us their sympathy and support in this regard. I wish particularly to express our deep appreciation to many third-world nations for their expressions of a sense of solidarity in this hour of grief and moral outrage.

38. There is, however, one country which has not shown any remorse or anguish or sense of moral regret over the tragedy which has happened. That country, as we all know, is the Soviet Union. As we have witnessed during the past few days, the Soviet Union refuses to give an honest and direct accounting of exactly what has happened. While the world waits for the Soviet Union to provide a straightforward answer, the Russians have been busy concocting flagrant lies.

39. On the afternoon of 2 September [*ibid.*], in the Council, the representative of the Soviet Union supplied us with a fictional account by TASS in which the Soviet Union makes the preposterous allegation that the Korean Air Lines plane in question was carrying out what TASS called "intelligence aims". What is interesting about this piece of Soviet fiction is that it quite faithfully betrays the mentality of its author. The truth is that only the Soviet Union would try "to attain special intelligence aims without hindrance using civilian planes as a cover", as TASS says. Only a totalitarian State whose scale of values does not place much weight on human lives can even imagine that one would risk jeopardizing the lives of hundreds of innocent persons, from many different nations, "to attain special intelligence aims".

40. Speaking for my country, the Republic of Korea could not even conceive of using civilian commercial airlines to gather intelligence, let alone actually engage in such reckless, inhuman and immoral practice.

41. After issuing the statement on 2 September, however, Russian propaganda specialists must have come to realize that it would sound quite preposterous and not believable to the outsider world, because the TASS press agency was burdened on 4 September—two days after making the initial allegation—with the task of issuing another lie. The new lie, the new fiction—this time attributed to General Semyon Romanov, Chief of the main staff of the anti-aircraft defence forces—implies, without precisely stating so however, that the Russian pilots may

have mistaken the Korean Air Lines Boeing 747 for the RC-135 American reconnaissance plane.

42. Now, everyone knows that the Boeing 747 and the RC-135 are of different sizes and different shapes. Unless Soviet fighter pilots are recruited exclusively from only those with seriously defective eyesight, it is impossible to imagine that they could have mistaken one aeroplane for the other.

43. But what is even more interesting to note is the fact that the lies offered by the Soviet Union on 2 and 4 September, respectively, are in mutual contradiction with each other. Are the TASS editors aware of the fact that, if the Soviet pilots shot down the Korean Air Lines aeroplane—as they initially seemed to have implied—because they believed it was carrying out intelligence functions, they could not at the same time say that they believed they were shooting down a different aeroplane, an RC-135?

44. Such logical errors, it seems to me, reflect not so much the level of intelligence among TASS editors as the fact that a lie, once uttered, leads to another lie and more lies, which inevitably contradict one other, because they are unrelated to truth. It is in the nature of a cover-up that it cannot but be self-defeating. He who lies must lie more and more to cover up his earlier lies until he is destroyed by his own lies. That, clearly, is the present predicament of the Soviet Union.

45. I shall not take up more of the Council's valuable time listing all the lies the Russians have been busily concocting to cover up their heinous crime, because to do so would take up too much time, and, besides, it is unnecessary, as we can all see through Soviet lies without too much difficulty. But before I conclude, I must point out one incredible fact and ask one central question.

46. The incredible fact is that the Soviet Union in the last few days, including today, has been busy inventing lies to justify an action which it does not admit to having taken. This I can only say is a strange spectacle indeed. Why should the Russians issue all those TASS fictions and Government statements when they are not admitting to having taken the action which those fictions and lies are clearly intended to justify? Interestingly enough, the representative of the Soviet Union kindly read to us this afternoon a statement by his Government which, after telling now-familiar lies about the Korean Air Lines plane allegedly carrying out intelligence functions, declares that the Soviet plane "fulfilled the order of the command post to stop the flight" of "the intruder plane" [*para. 3*] and that "The Soviet pilots, in stopping the actions of the intruder plane, could not know that it was a civilian aircraft" [*ibid.*].

47. The evidence presented this morning proves beyond any shred of doubt that the Korean Air Lines plane in question had its navigational lights on and that the Soviet pilot saw those lights. What spy planes would have navigational lights on while intruding into another country's airspace? The Soviet allegation is obviously ridiculous, false and untrue.

48. What is even more curious is that once again the Soviet authorities could not quite bring themselves to admit explicitly in a straightforward manner that their forces after all shot down the Korean Air Lines plane. Instead, they once again used evasive and cowardly words to imply, without saying so, that they did indeed shoot down the Korean Air Lines plane.

49. I wonder why Soviet officials are so hesitant about using more direct, explicit and honest expressions. I wonder whether it may not be because even the people in the so-called ruling circles of the Soviet Union are aware of the fact that in the final analysis nothing, absolutely nothing, can justify the cold-blooded, brutal murder of defenceless, innocent civilians of many different nations.

50. In 1973, when an incident involving a Libyan civil aeroplane was discussed at the nineteenth extraordinary session of the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on 28 February, the Soviet delegation referred to the incident as a "criminal act of international terrorism". He further stated that "ICAO cannot remain aloof from this barbaric act". The Soviet representative concluded that the ICAO Assembly "must strongly condemn this criminal act".

51. Let us hope that the Soviet Union has not forgotten its own words. Let us also hope that it will not only remember its own words but apply them to its own conduct.

52. Now, the question. The central question I should like to put to the Soviet representative is this. Before the Soviet Union produces more lies to justify an action it does not have the courage to admit to having taken, it must, first, answer these questions: Did you or did you not shoot down the unarmed, defenceless Korean Air Lines plane? Did you or did you not murder 269 innocent people? Did you or did you not commit the most heinous massacre ever committed in the air? If you say that you did not, which my impression is that most quarters now seem to have the courage to question, the world will know you are simply lying. After what we heard this morning [*2471st meeting*], there cannot be any doubt in anybody's mind as to who murdered 269 innocent people aboard the Korean Air Lines plane. However, if you are prepared to admit openly, honestly, explicitly, in a straightforward manner, sincerely, that you did indeed commit the murder, you will at least have taken the first step in the right direction.

53. We sincerely hope that the Soviet Union will reconsider its attitude and decide to tell us the truth. We hope so for the sake of the victims of this unspeakable, barbarous crime. The dead are now voiceless. But we, whose lives may yet be put in jeopardy if this crime is allowed to go unpunished, must speak up. We must do everything possible within our power to guarantee the safety of all future air travellers. The Council, even though its capacity to act is often constrained, as we all know, must perform

its duty as the court of decent opinion of mankind. On this very crisis which faces the Council today, mankind has already clearly spoken its judgement. Condemnation of the Soviet crime is universal and unambiguous. The world now awaits action by this body. Let us hope the Council will discharge its responsibilities responsibly, courageously and effectively.

54. I must also warn the Soviet Union that the world will never settle for lies and evasions. The words that Soviet officials have uttered on this tragic incident amount to an insult to the intelligence of mankind. Even now the Soviet Union refuses to respond with any trace of honesty and a minimum of human decency to the eloquent expressions of grief and moral outrage by the representatives of all the countries that are participating in the Council's discussion. I warn the Soviet Union that the civilized world will continue to pursue the matter beyond the walls of this chamber and press the guilty until the Soviet authorities admit to their crime and accede to the five demands my Government has put forward.

55. If Moscow believes it can evade its responsibilities by telling lies and more lies, it seriously underestimates the powers of intelligence and conscience of mankind. The Soviet Union will never—I repeat, never—be able to avoid the consequences of its crime.

56. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Sierra Leone. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

57. Mr. KOROMA (Sierra Leone): Mr. President, I wish to thank you and the other members of the Council severally and collectively for granting my delegation the opportunity to participate in your deliberations on the matter before the Council—the tragic loss of the Korean jet air liner. But before doing so I wish to state, Sir, that the Council is fortunate to have a diplomat of your calibre presiding over its affairs at this moment in time. We have had the privilege of working closely with you and can attest to your high level of competence and impartiality and to your ability to find solutions to difficult issues, qualities which the Council will surely need during this difficult period of its deliberations.

58. The Sierra Leone Government, on learning about this tragic incident, issued the following statement which, with your permission, Sir, I will now read. The statement reads as follows:

> "Reports that a Korean aircraft on a regular scheduled flight from New York to Seoul disappeared and wreckage was spotted over the Sea of Japan has reached the Government of Sierra Leone with profound shock.
>
> "The Government of Sierra Leone views this unfortunate incident with grave concern, considering, in particular, the implications and consequences it has for international air travel.
>
> "It is out of this concern, the tragic loss of life and the ever-present need to make our international community more secure, that the Government of Sierra Leone supports the call for the Security Council to meet and fully investigate the cause of the disappearance of the Korean Air Lines aircraft."

59. Since this tragic incident took place, there has been an incessant flow of evidence as to what really happened. However, such information has remained incomplete and in some cases confusing. A lot of questions remain unanswered. And it is in this respect and also to ensure that such an incident does not occur in the future that my Government feels impelled to call for a thorough investigation of the incident.

60. The tragedy which surrounds the Korean jet air liner further demonstrates the need to reduce international tension through confidence-building measures.

61. We should also like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families of those who perished in the tragedy.

62. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Nigeria, whom I invite to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

63. Mr. FAFOWORA (Nigeria): As this is my first statement in a formal meeting of the Council under your presidency, Sir, I should like first of all to avail myself of this opportunity to extend to you and to the delegation of Guyana my warmest congratulations on your accession to the presidency. I have particular pleasure in doing so, not only because Guyana is a Commonwealth country with which my own country, Nigeria, has very cordial relations, but also because we are familiar with your considerable diplomatic skills, patience, wisdom and tact. These qualities will be sorely tested in the difficult days ahead when, under your guidance, the Council continues its deliberations on this tragic event. But we are confident that you will bring your considerable diplomatic resources to bear on the efforts of the Council to resolve this problem.

64. The Government and people of Nigeria were deeply shocked and stunned by the shooting down on Thursday, 1 September, of an unarmed civilian jumbo jet of Korean Air Lines on a routine commercial flight from New York to Seoul. We grieve and mourn the loss of 269 innocent lives in the horrendous tragedy, which was totally unnecessary. It is incomprehensible that a civilian plane on a routine commercial flight should have been so wantonly destroyed. Many explanations have been given for this tragedy and it may well be that the full facts concerning this most unfortunate incident have not yet been fully established. To be charitable, one might even recognize the probability that this was the result of a simple blunder by an air force pilot and that the Korean jet air liner was accidentally shot down in the mistaken belief that it was a spy plane.

65. Regardless of the circumstances and any explanation which may be proffered—and so far the explanations have left many questions unanswered—there can be no justification whatever for shooting down the unarmed Korean civilian air liner which resulted in the death of 269 innocent passengers.

66. But this incident is a symptom of a much deeper malaise in the international situation. The world is today beset by a host of human tragedies, conflicts and destruction, most of which are a direct consequence of increased international tension. In recent times, the super-Powers appear to have embarked on confrontation and on a collision path, thereby posing a grave danger, not only to international peace and security but also to the very existence and safety of ordinary men, women and children throughout the world who simply want to live in peace. In Africa, the ambitions and rivalry of the super-Powers is reflected in the series of civil wars in our continent, particularly in southern Africa, where tension, conflict and loss of life have become all too common. It is a totally deplorable situation and one which calls for a deliberate and sustained effort by the super-Powers to seek accommodation and co-operation between themselves in order to reduce international tension.

67. In the case of the Korean jet incident, the fundamental principle of air safety appears to have been grossly violated. Airline passengers have an inherent right to travel in safety. That right is now being placed in jeopardy by the event of last week. It is a very grave matter and calls for the concern of the entire international community, for who knows what might happen next? It is not really difficult to imagine how easily a nuclear exchange between the two super-Powers may occur through a similar military blunder and we already have some well-documented accounts of such horrendous near-misses. It is intolerable that innocent lives should have been so wantonly destroyed for security reasons which, in retrospect, may not have been well founded.

68. My Government is deeply concerned about the possible consequences of this act, which even now may not be totally or correctly foreseen. We urge that air safety rules be tightened so as to prevent a reoccurrence of the Korean jet incident. It is also our expectation that in the course of time, when the facts of the incident have been fully established, necessary financial restitution will be made to the families of the innocent victims of that incident.

69. We ask you, Sir, to convey our condolences to all the bereaved families.

70. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

71. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): It is an honour for my delegation to participate in this Council debate when you, Sir, are presiding over this body. We are confident that your wisdom, long experience and diplomatic skill will surely guide our deliberations in the right direction.

72. My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to convey our deep appreciation to your predecessor, the representative of France, for his outstanding leadership in guiding the work of the Council during the month of August.

73. The news of the disappearance and destruction of a civilian aircraft of the Republic of Korea with 269 passengers on board has deeply shocked the Government and people of Bangladesh. Their feelings have found profound expression in the message of Lieutenant-General H. M. Ershad, President of the Council of Ministers of Bangladesh, addressed to the President of the Republic of Korea, Chun Doo Hwan, on 2 September. In his message the President of the Council of Ministers expressed shock at "the tragic loss of innocent human lives" and extended "heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the bereaved families".

74. This incident is a tragedy of serious magnitude. The destruction of a civilian aircraft causing death to 269 innocent men, women and children has deeply shocked and saddened all peace-loving and justice-upholding peoples. The people of Bangladesh share the grief and sorrow of the bereaved families that have lost their near and dear ones on board the ill-fated aircraft.

75. Every independent State has the exclusive right to exercise sovereignty over its airspace. Indeed, it is an internationally recognized principle. At the same time, no principle of international norms or civilized code of conduct can justify the destruction of a scheduled plane flying over the airspace of a third country under any circumstances, especially when such an action endangers innocent human lives. International conventions on civil aviation grant safety and security to civilian aircraft overflying the airspace of foreign countries. An incident of such a nature, therefore, is tantamount to the violation of obligations enshrined in international conventions. This tragic incident has made it imperative to ensure the adoption of all possible measures to prevent the recurrence of such disasters.

76. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

77. Mr. de PINIÉS (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, your well-known competence, skill and intelligence bode well for the Council's debates. Having been a colleague of yours in the Council last year, I am convinced that you will lead its deliberations to a satisfactory conclusion.

78. On 31 August, my Government learned of the destruction of a commercial air liner of the Republic of Korea that carried 269 persons, passengers and crew, over waters near the Japanese island of Hokkaido.

79. As soon as my Government learned that fact, it publicly stated, in a note from the Diplomatic Information Office, that, were the deliberate nature of that act of destruction to be confirmed, "that act would represent a

serious violation of international law, a blow to relations among peoples and a grave injury to the moral conscience of humanity."

80. In the same note, the Spanish Government, after expressing its heartfelt condolences to the Government of the Republic of Korea as well as to the Governments of the other victims who perished as a result of this tragic incident, urged that an unequivocal and adequate explanation of the facts be provided.

81. My Government believes that the explanations given so far by the Soviet Union with regard to this incident are unsatisfactory. We therefore support the proposal submitted to the Council by other countries to ask the Secretary-General to conduct an investigation into the facts and to report to the Council on the outcome.

82. Spain, as a member of the Permanent Council of ICAO, also believes that ICAO could conduct a technical analysis of the incident that could thus contribute to shedding some light on the facts.

83. Despite the extraordinary gravity of this incident, one that has aroused the natural condemnation of all peace-loving peoples, my delegation believes that the efforts that are being undertaken to achieve détente in international relations at various levels and in various forums must continue. It is precisely in times of tension that we must not lose sight of the priority goals of détente and peace.

84. My Government hopes that at the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs that begins tomorrow at Madrid a contribution may be made towards those objectives.

85. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

86. Mr. SYED ARIFF (Malaysia): May I at the outset congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of September. My delegation is pleased to see in the chair a person of your stature, experience and ability. Given your qualities my delegation is confident the Council will be able to achieve constructive results. At the same time I should like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to you and, through you, to the members of the Council, for giving me the opportunity to address the Council this afternoon.

87. It was with shock and indignation that the Government and people of Malaysia learned of the circumstances of the shooting of the South Korean commercial air liner on 31 August. Subsequently my Government issued a statement which reads as follows:

> "Malaysia is horrified and appalled over the reported shooting down of an unarmed Korean civilian commercial aircraft, which was flying from Anchorage to Seoul, by Soviet military aircraft, causing the death of 269 lives in the aircraft. Malaysia joins the international community in condemning, in the most serious terms, this wanton act of savagery and arrogance which is in complete disregard for human lives and international convention and good sense. We call upon the guilty party concerned to give a full explanation of this unpardonable act to the world community and to take all necessary steps to fully redress the harm done to the kith and kin of the unfortunate passengers."

88. The loss of 269 innocent lives makes the incident one of the worst air disasters in aviation history. There can be no justification, whatever might have been the circumstances, for the downing of the unarmed civilian aircraft serving no military purpose, even if it had strayed into Soviet airspace.

89. This latest incident has raised serious questions with regard to the safety of international civil aviation. This callous action should never have occurred and must not be allowed to occur again. The Council should now be seized to initiate a process to prevent a repetition of such an occurrence.

90. Air travel today is so extensive and the air lanes so crowded that it is impossible to discount a navigational or human error in operating an aircraft. My delegation is in full agreement with the statement of the representative of Pakistan that what is required in such circumstances is the exercise of compassion and forbearance and the avoidance of extreme and drastic measures. In any case, there are standard procedures to be followed if an unidentified commercial aircraft strays into foreign airspace. But shooting down the plane is definitely not one of the standard procedures.

91. My delegation joins other members of the international community in demanding an immediate and full accounting of the incident from the Soviet authorities. Although there have been conjectures in this regard, we feel they are insufficient. The Soviet Union owes the international community a full explanation of the circumstances surrounding the shooting down of the South Korean aircraft, and we appeal to the Soviet Union to live up to this responsibility.

92. My delegation would also like to join the international community in expressing to members of the bereaved families our deep sympathy and profound condolences on the loss of their loved ones in this tragic incident. In accordance with the rules and practices of international civil aviation, the Soviet Union must be urged to compensate immediately the kith and kin of these unfortunate victims.

93. The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

94. Mr. TREIKI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I should like on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. My

delegation is pleased to see you guiding our deliberations since yours is a friendly and non-aligned country.

95. My delegation extends its condolences and sympathy to the families of the innocent people who lost their lives aboard the South Korean aircraft.

96. My delegation knows very well what the situation is like inasmuch as our country experienced a similar loss when a Libyan aircraft on a flight from Tripoli to Cairo on 21 February 1973 was shot down with missiles and destroyed in a piratical act on the part of air force planes belonging to the Zionist entity. Aboard that plane were 104 civilian passengers and 9 crew members. That Zionist act of aggression took a toll of 108 victims. They were of many nationalities, including 39 Egyptians, 4 Syrians, 2 Britons, 4 Jordanians, 3 Lebanese, 1 American, 1 German and 45 Libyans, as well as 2 Palestinians and the French pilot and the French flight engineer.

97. That act of aggression was the first incident of its kind in which a civilian aircraft was exposed to direct aggression from the Zionist occupying forces in Sinai at the time. Despite its well-deserved and widespread condemnation, that act was not, I am sorry to say, the object of such an intense—although legitimate—world-wide campaign such as the one we are witnessing today.

98. The Zionist act of aggression against the Libyan civilian aircraft and this incident involving the South Korean aircraft must show the whole world that there are important matters to be taken into account: first of all, the grave risk that the use of reconnaissance planes may represent to international civilian aviation, and the ensuing tragedies like the one we are facing today. Reconnaissance and AWACS planes have also been used in the Mediterranean region to jam civilian aircraft communications and disrupt air traffic, and if this situation continues it will cause many international catastrophes.

99. We must not let this terrible incident be used to settle international scores or cast aspersions on a specific party. Instead, we should treat it as a lesson and draw the appropriate conclusions so as to put an end to such incidents and ensure safe international air traffic.

100. The exploitation of this human tragedy for narrow, electoral-campaign reasons or to settle scores will only complicate matters. It would be more worthwhile for the Council to study the matter more objectively.

101. What were the causes of this incident and of the aforementioned incident involving Zionist aggression against a Libyan aircraft? What harm is caused by the use of reconnaissance and other aircraft to jam civilian aircraft communications and disrupt civilian air traffic? If acts of this sort continue, we can only expect further tragic incidents.

102. While we draw the attention of the Council anew to an incident that occurred years ago, we hope that what has happened today is a lesson that should remind us of what has happened in the past.

103. We reaffirm our keen desire to continue to contribute to the efforts to devise ways and means of ensuring the safety of international civil aviation and to prevent tragedies that could result from violations of international laws and norms.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

NOTE

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 15, No. 102.

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